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Policy coherence for vulnerability in migration. The crossroads of migrant integration governance

Políticas de coherencia para la vulnerabilidad en la migración. La encrucijada en la gobernanza de la integración de los migrantes

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Summary: Introduction. 1. Literature review. 1.1. Understanding vulnerability in Migration and the lack of Governance Action for Migrant Integration. 1.2. Policy coherence for vulnerability in migration. 2. Method. 2.1. Analytical procedure. 3. Findings. 3.1. Qualitative review: Integration of migrants through MIPEX and EMN Research. 3.2. Migrant integration in France. 3.3. Migrant integration in Italy. 3.4. Migrant integration in the Netherlands. 3.5. Migrant integration in Portugal. 3.6. Migrant integration in Germany. 3.7. Migrant integration in Spain. 3.8. Migrant integration in Sweden. 3.9. Quantitative review: Perceived discrimination of migrants through ESS. 3.10. Differences in means of the 7-EU Case Countries. Conclusion. References.

Abstract: International migration is a multidimensional reality of great relevance for the development of countries of origin, transit, and destination, which requires coherent and comprehensive responses from governments. The objectives of this work are threefold. The first objective is to provide an overview of the levels of integration in the European context through

reviewing policy indicators related to the vulnerabilities to which migrants are exposed. This objective draws on the Migration Policy Index for Integration (MIPEX) and a review of reports of the European Migration Network Luxembourg. The second objective, identifying differences in the levels of protection perceived by racial minority groups in the selected case countries, is achieved by using data from the European Social Survey. Finally, the need for a policy coherence approach to vulnerability in migration will be addressed as a proposal for a trade-off between sectoral dimensions and a strategy for mitigating the vulnerabilities identified.

Keywords: International migration, migrant integration, perceived protection, racialized minorities, policy coherence.

Resumen: La migración internacional es una realidad multidimensional de gran relevancia para el desarrollo de los países de origen, tránsito y destino, que necesita de respuestas coherentes e integrales por parte de los gobiernos. El presente estudio tiene por objeto realizar una revisión de indicadores políticos relacionados con la vulnerabilidad a la que están expuestos los migrantes a través del Índice de Políticas para la Integración (MIPEX, en sus siglas en inglés) junto a una revisión de informes de la Red Europea de Migraciones de Luxemburgo a fin de ofrecer una panorámica de los niveles de integración en el contexto europeo. Para complementar esta exploración, se realizará un estudio a través de los datos de la Encuesta Social Europea a objeto de identificar diferencias en los niveles de protección que perciben grupos pertenecientes a minorías racializadas sobre los países caso seleccionados. Finalmente, se abordarán la necesidad de un enfoque de coherencia de políticas públicas para la vulnerabilidad en la migración como propuesta para la compensación entre dimensiones sectoriales y estrategia para la mitigación de las vulnerabilidades detectadas.

Palabras clave: Integración de migrantes, migración internacional, minorías racializadas, políticas de coherencia, protección percibida.

Introduction[1]

In times of uncertainty, coherence is a fundamental aspect to moderate the potentially pernicious effects of inadequate management of phenomena such as migration. International migration is a multidimensional reality of great relevance for the development of countries of origin, transit, and destination, which requires coherent and comprehensive responses from governments (OECD 2018). The current global estimate is that there were around 281 million international migrants in the world in 2020, which equates to 3.6 per cent of the global population. Europe is currently the largest destination for international migrants, with 87 million migrants (30.9% of the international migrant population) (McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou 2021). The rights of migrants are fundamental here, firstly for the migrants themselves and secondly to ensure that they can contribute to the development of their communities of origin and destination (De Hass 2010). The UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development urges all States to ensure "safe, orderly and regular migration involving full respect for human rights and the humane treatment of migrants regardless of migration status" (UN 2015, 8). This is also echoed in the central commitment and guiding principle of the Global Migration Compact (Cachón 2023).

Migration policies and incentives to promote the integration of migrants in countries of destination are paramount for coherent migration and development policies (Koff 2017). In the New York Declaration (UN 2016), for instance, states commit addressing xenophobia, racism and discrimination against refugees and migrants and taking action to improve their integration, with particular emphasis on inclusiveness and access to key areas such as education, health care, justice, and work. Among the 23 objectives and commitments in the Global Compact for Migration (2018), which is based on the New York Declaration, is the principle of providing access to basic services for migrants. More specifically, the Compact states the opportunities that need to be provided to migrants and societies in order for them to achieve full inclusion and social cohesion. It further aims to eliminate all forms of discrimination, facilitate return and readmission, and promote an evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration (Cachón 2023).

Tools and studies, such as MIPEX, which proposes an index of integration policies (MIPEX 2019), or related publications by the European Migration Network (EMN) (European Commission 2023), are crucial for monitoring the reality of migrant integration and for evaluating the progress made in achieving demands and objectives stated in agreements such as the Compact (Gobierno de España 2020). Several studies, for example in the Spanish context by the *Observatorio Español para el Racismo y la Xenofobia*, in France developed by *Délégation Interministérielle à la Lutte Contre le Racisme, l'Antisémitisme et la Haine anti-LGBT* or at the European level by the *European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights* shall be highlighted here.

This study addresses three key questions:

1. How do integration strategies differ amongst the seven case countries in Europe?
2. How do racialized minorities perceive their protection in these states?
3. Is there a relationship between integration strategies and the perceptions of racialized minority groups?

To answer these questions, this study reviews policy indicators related to the vulnerability faced by migrants through the Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) and several technical reports conducted by the European Migration Network of Luxembourg (EMN) to provide an overview of the strategies for and levels of integration in the European context. In addition, a mapping of the European Social Survey (ESS) data will be carried out to identify patterns in the perception of the perceived minority groups protection among racial minority groups in each of the case countries (France, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Germany, Spain, and Sweden). As a strategy for trade-offs between integration policies in sectoral dimensions, an extension of the OECD Policy Coherence for Migration and Development approach (OECD 2019; Koff 2017) will be proposed in order to mitigate vulnerabilities and enhance resilience.

1. **Literature Review**

1.1. *Understanding vulnerability in migration and the lack of governance action for migrant integration*

One of the basic analytical foundations of this research is the premise that vulnerability is socially constructed. The same holds true

of institutions, which have it in their power to be guarantors of well-being. This, however, is not always the case, as in many cases institutions tend to reproduce inequalities (Moldes-Anaya et al. 2022). In fact, vulnerability has become a dominant social characteristic as theoretical and empirical models currently in operation demonstrate (Birkmann 2006; Heidenreich and Wunder 2008; Busetta et al. 2019) as well as an analytical concept (Gilodi et al. 2022).

The concept of social vulnerability emerged from the field of Disaster Sociology in the 1960s, but it is also rooted in the Sociology of Risk (Beck 1998). This concept entails two explanatory components: (i) the insecurity and defenselessness experienced by communities and individuals in their living conditions as a result of the impact caused by traumatic events (e.g. economic, social or climatic) and (ii) the management and access to resources and strategies by communities and individuals to cope with adverse events. In this context, social vulnerability can be defined as the result of the current development pattern, while it also expresses the inability of most vulnerable groups to cope with, neutralize or benefit from such event. According to this conceptualization, vulnerability assessments in the Sociology of Risk (Lidskog and Sundvist 2012) focus on understanding and determining the scope and intensity of a humanitarian situation and the capacity of individuals and communities to cope with the harmful effects (Alwang et al. 2001).

In this sense, social vulnerability is considered a multidimensional phenomenon which continues to also affect the modern post-industrial societies of Western Europe as a result of the emerging of social risks (Luhmann 1993; van Asselt and Renn 2011; Roeser et al. 2012; Acik et al. 2022) such as the flexibilization of the labor market and income insecurity; the polarization of the housing market and the resulting shortage of affordable housing; the health system and the increase of dependencies resulting from aging populations together with partially negative population growth as well as other related social risk exposures (Ranci 2010). These vulnerabilities have been aggravated by a combination of production and consumption modes and incoherent political decision-making (Koff 2020), which have favored the development of an unequal, inefficient, and unsustainable development model (Trinidad et al. 2019). The resulting vicious cycle can lead to devastating consequences and has served as the basis for a new sustainability paradigm. This paradigm aims to harmonize existing interregional inequalities by promoting new patterns of governance based on trade-offs between policies in which the Sustainable Development Goals are inserted (Koff 2022).

The relationship between social vulnerability and migration is inherently complex and multifaceted. As mentioned above, social vulnerability refers to the susceptibility of individuals, groups or communities to harm or negative impacts due to several factors. Broadly speaking, migration refers to the movement of people from one place to another, usually across strongly securitized national or regional borders that control migratory flows and determine different thresholds of vulnerability (Castles 2010). As the literature notes, people may migrate for a variety of reasons, such as economic opportunities, the influence of transnational communities operating at origin and destination, because of political instability, due to environmental factors or the search for refuge caused by conflicts and ethnic persecution (Barros et al. 2023). Social vulnerability can therefore significantly influence migrants' decision to migrate and experiences (Stewart 2005).

In the migration context, social vulnerabilities can often be understood as (a variety of) pull factors (Lee 1966), reaching from socioeconomic, over societal, to environmental and political issues. When people or communities facing poverty, lack of job opportunities, limited access to healthcare, education or basic services may feel compelled to move in search of better conditions elsewhere. Conversely, more favorable socioeconomic conditions in other countries can act as pull factors (Benson and O'Reilly 2009).

Push factors can however also extend beyond socioeconomic issues for example when marginalized and discriminated social groups, such as ethnic or religious minorities or refugees, might see migration towards more inclusive societies with broader social, economic, and political rights (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al. 2014) as the only way to escape limited opportunities.

Vulnerability to environmental risks is another determining factor, as natural catastrophes, the effects of climate change or ecological degradation can impact migration in a decisive way. Communities living in areas, which are (or have become) for example prone to flooding or extreme drought may be forced to move to safer regions. Climate (-induced) migration is becoming increasingly relevant as climate change accelerates (McLeman and Smit 2006; Nash 2019).

Social vulnerability is also closely related to conflicts and political instability, which can trigger migration as the recent refugee crisis due to the war in Syria or in Afghanistan demonstrate. People subjected to constant human rights violations, living in areas of armed conflict, and/or victims of persecution, may be forced to flee their homes and seek safety in other parts of the world (Içiduygu and Karadag 2018; Seven 2020).

Migration could be seen as a means of potential migrants to reach safety as well as their access to human rights and economic security. However, at the same time, it could potentially increase social vulnerabilities in destination countries (Gilodi et al. 2022). The latter depends on the circumstances and opportunities available to migrants in receiving countries, which in turn is directly related to whether public institutions contribute to the generation of vulnerabilities or whether they seek to counter them. Here lies the emphasis of the theoretical framework presented here, which centers on the exposure of migrants to vulnerabilities in the receiving countries and focuses on integration strategies for the inclusion of migrants. To this end, the institutional management of vulnerabilities faced by migrants in receiving countries and how these hinder or promote opportunities in the processes of social inclusion and resilience (Butler et al., 2016) is to be highlighted. Governmental institutions play a central role here as they design and implement the relevant policies (Koff 2017). The vulnerabilities migrants may experience in receiving countries are related to their degree of integration into the labor market, access to education, political participation, access to citizenship rights and family reunification, access to the national health care system, and also to any (potentially) existing anti-discrimination strategies, which are crucial to support inclusion processes (Gonda et al. 2020).

In the definition of migrant integration policies and regardless of partisanship, political strategies for migration integration are based on ambiguity predominate. Such strategies allow policymakers to placate multiple political actors in a political controversy over a highly complex issue such as migrant integration. In this regard, Dekker (2017) shows that ambiguity fosters the dominance of incomplete and inconsistent frameworks.

Additional studies assess migrant integration levels by focusing on how different political perspectives impact decision-making. Solano and De Coninck (2023) identify three main streams: evidence-based, institutionalist, and partisan. The evidence-based perspective prioritizes policy decisions based on objective factors (e.g., number of migrants or gross domestic product). The institutionalist perspective emphasizes institutional conditions (labor market or welfare institutions in general). The partisan perspective prioritizes ideologies and the modulation of public opinion on the issue. Clearly, there are gaps in policy action on addressing the integration of migrants. For increasing policy coherence, governance of migrant integration must move away from ambiguity in policy treatment, design and implementation. The challenge of

governance of migrant integration requires a transformational change as this issue should be addressed by moving towards more systemic and efficient models that involve greater functionality of social systems and institutions.

1.2. *Policy coherence for vulnerability in migration*

Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) was first proposed by the European Union (EU) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in the 1990s (Moldes-Anaya et al. 2022). Since then, it has been used by international organizations and their member states as a means to promote sustainable development. PCD is included in Target 17.14 of the 2030 Agenda, which focuses on sustainability partnerships to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In global discussions, this concept has been recoined as Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) to emphasize the relevance of "whole-of-government approaches" to addressing sustainability (Larsson 2018).

Policy Coherence for Migration and Development (PCMD) is a recent related approach that brings together PCD and PCSD to ensure that migration and development policies are coherent, mutually reinforcing, and aligned with each other by trying to find trade-offs between sectoral policies that affect migration and development (Koff 2017). More precisely, PCD starts from the existing interconnection between migration and development and aims to maximize the positive impacts of migration for the migrants as well as for the residents in the countries of origin, in those of transit, and in those of destination. The Thematic Working Group on Policy and Institutional Coherence of the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD) designed two comprehensive dashboards of indicators to measure policy coherence on migration and development (PCMD) that are operational and that could form the basis of a future methodological analysis tool to map coherence in migration and development policy (KNOMAD 2020).

On that basis, this research proposes synthesizing PCD, PCSD, and PCMD to generate a framework of Policy Coherence for Vulnerability in Migration (PCVM). This inclusive framework uses migrants' self-perceived vulnerabilities as a tool to test for policy coherence in integration policies, which is why it is capable of ensuring that policies address the migrants' vulnerabilities migrants in a comprehensive and integrated manner. Thus, PCVM focuses on promoting policies that

effectively respond to the specific needs and challenges of migrants as vulnerable groups, taking into account in particular the social, economic and legal vulnerabilities they face. The employment of the PCVM strategy would focus on understanding vulnerability in each of its dimensions (Gilodi et al. 2022) and determining the risk factors to which they are exposed. This requires the consideration of the inherent intersectionality of vulnerabilities as risk factors such as socioeconomic status, legal status, gender, age, ethnicity, disability, often occur in parallel and are interlinked (Kuran et al. 2020).

PCVM requires that the policy response to vulnerability be well managed and coordinated. The manifold sectors and levels and bodies of government involved need to respond in a cooperative and comprehensive way to holistically balance different sectoral policies (OECD 2018). PCVM stresses the importance of comprehensively addressing the root causes of vulnerabilities; including all dimensions that encompass poverty; the search for the main reasons for inequalities and discrimination; for the lack of access to resources as a cause of social exclusion and economic inequalities. In short, all vulnerability risk factors need to be addressed to foster inclusive development as Human Rights (Rush 2010). Therefore, the provision of migrants' welfare is a priority, that involves providing access to essential services, the necessary social protection including non-discrimination, including health care, education, work, and legal support in all areas, especially those concerning protection at work or the acquisition of permanent residence and citizenship rights (Wallace 2014).

PCVM as a framework for policy engagement prioritizes the participation and awareness of the most vulnerable migrants, creating the basis for their demands to be taken into account in decision making. To this end, PCVM encourages the development of associations among migrants themselves (Taylor 2015). Further, it underlines that civil society needs to be made aware of the significance of coherent migration policies and that this is always to be done through transparent communication of the positive aspects of integration and its benefits for the citizenry as a whole (Gobierno de España 2014). It is also important to reach out to other stakeholders to ensure that policies are truly responsive to the needs within the framework of orderly and sustainable migration. The PCVM framework has the capability to tackle vulnerabilities in a comprehensive and integrated manner. Its coherent approach targets trade-offs in policy design and policymakers can strategically work to reduce vulnerabilities, to promote the well-being of migrants, and to encourage inclusive and sustainable development (Acik et al. 2022; Triandafyllidou and Yeoh 2023).

2. **Method**

2.1. *Analytical procedure*

The study uses a mixed methods research approach that combines the bottom-up perspective of qualitative policy analysis research, with the top down perspective of quantitative survey analysis. Accordingly, in this study we follow a sequential explanatory approach divided into two structurally different but related phases (Creswell 2014).

The first part analyzes a set of qualitative data from the MIPEX and ENM Reports. In the second phase, data from the 10th Round of the European Social Survey will be used for a quantitative analysis to identify signs of perceived protection of resident racialized minorities in receiving countries. For both approaches the case countries selected are France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Germany, Spain, and Sweden. The selection of the countries is based on the structural characteristics, their geographical location, and their representativeness, which facilitate the interregional (e.g. south/central/north Europe) hypotheses testing.

3. **Findings**

3.1. *Qualitative review: Integration of migrants through MIPEX and EMN Research*

The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) is a globally available tool that measures immigrant integration policies in 56 countries on six continents, including all EU Member States. MIPEX allows assessing and comparing what governments are actually doing to improve the integration of immigrants. The MIPEX project informs and involves key policy actors by using these indicators to advance governance for inclusiveness and policy effectiveness. Countries are ranked according to their adherence to certain integration policies in different sectoral dimensions. Scores range from 0 (critically unfavorable) to 100 (favorable). The ranking scale is as follows:

Table 1
Degrees of migrant integration in 7-EU Case Countries

Ranking scale	
80 to 100	Favorable
60 to 69	Slightly favorable
41 to 59	Halfway favorable
21 to 40	Slightly unfavorable
1 to 20	Unfavorable
0	Critically unfavorable

Source: MIPEX 2019.

The order of the following sections on the findings on migrant integration in the seven case countries is in ascending order of their migration scores. Below in Table 2, an overview of their overall migration score is provided.

Table 2
Overview of overall migration scores (with health) in case countries and EU28, MIPEX 65, and OECD-countries (2019)

Country	Value
France	56
Italy	58
Netherlands	57
Portugal	81
Germany	58
Spain	60
Sweden	86
EU28	49
MIPEX56	49
OECD	56

Source: MIPEX 2019.

3.2. *Migrant integration in France*

According to EMN research, France employs a personalized integration pathway, the "Republican Integration Contract"[2], which every migrant (including refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection) who is legally residing in France, must sign. This 4-year contract between the French state and the migrant has four main objectives, namely migrants' (1) comprehension of the values and principles of the French Republic; (2) acquisition of the French language; (3) social and professional integration; and (4) self-sufficiency.

The reception process of migrants includes an individual interview focusing on their personal, family, social, and professional situation to guide them towards any potentially required services (public or run by associations). In addition, the applicant benefits from language training (if needed), receives an obligatory civic education and professional orientation course through the public employment services (EMN 2015).

Table 3
Summary of policy indicator scores in France (2019).

FRANCE		
MIPEX Score (with health) 56		
Dimension/Score	Individual Score	Position in Ranking
Labor Market Mobility	52	25
Family Reunion	43	46
Education	36	31
Health	65	20
Political Participation	45	19
Permanent Residence	58	28
Access to nationality	70	13
Anti-discrimination	79	25

Source: MIPEX 2019.

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[2] Law no. 2016-274 of 7 March 2016 relating to the rights of foreigners in France (Loi no. 2016-274 du 7 mars 2016 relative au droit des étrangers en France): https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000032164264.

According to the MIPEX assessment, France is slightly below (52) Western European/OECD (57) average as the country delays and discourages labor market mobility of non-EU immigrants to a greater extent than most Western European/OECD countries. While permanent residents and families joining from outside the EU can access the general labor market, training, and skills validation services, they are denied legal access to more regulated occupations than in all other countries. More specifically, third country nationals are not eligible for formal procedures, scholarships, or formal recognition of their non-EU qualifications. Policies for family reunification for non-EU families are more restrictive than in most Western European/OECD countries. For example, the financial and accommodation requirements for family reunification are quite demanding and the process can be arbitrary and lengthy. Once reunited, however, families can benefit from French integration support. After this process, spouses and children receive the same socio-economic rights and a path to individual residence (MIPEX 2019).

France has been slow to respond to the needs of and to provide opportunities for its significant number of first- and second-generation of school-aged children. Even though all pupils, regardless of their legal residence status, have the same right to compulsory and non-compulsory education and general educational support for pupils from deprived areas of France.

In addition, citizenship education lacks an appreciation of diversity. It should be noted, however, that France's relatively weak targeted support has improved slightly over the last decade.

As in most Western European countries, France provides inclusive and accessible health services to most migrant patients but it invests relatively little effort in addressing their specific health needs. It also provides information and guidance to health services. In general, migrants enjoy the same rights as legal residents and citizens in France (MIPEX 2019).

Even though France tends to facilitate both access to nationality and political rights for foreign residents, newcomers and foreign citizens are not regularly informed about how to participate in political and public life. France is also one of the few major destination countries for immigrants that has not taken political initiatives to extend local voting rights. After 3 to 5 years, temporary resident migrants must meet language, integration and, in some cases, economic requirements in order to obtain secure immigration status. While these requirements can become highly restrictive, it should be noted that this status is more egalitarian and secure than in most other countries (MIPEX 2019).

In France, immigrants embark on a path to citizenship similar to North American and most Western European countries: naturalization after five years, citizenship rights for children and dual nationality. However, over the last decade, access to nationality has become quite politicized. This has increasingly undermined citizenship as a tool for integration. For example, becoming a French citizen is conditional on employment and sufficient financial means. In addition, immigrants must also demonstrate one of the highest standards of language fluency in Europe (B1) and pass a screening 'assimilation interview'. As in the rest of Western Europe, French laws and policies to promote equality remain the country's most effective means for integration. France's anti-discrimination legislation and body (Défenseur des Droits/ Ombudsman) is quite powerful and efficient. As in many other European countries, anti-discrimination policies have had long-term effects in shaping public attitudes towards discrimination awareness and democratic values (MIPEX 2019).

3.3. *Migrant integration in Italy*

Italy based its integration program on its Integration Agreement, the *Accordo d'Integrazione*, which is signed when migrants obtain their first temporary residence permit. The *Accordo* is concluded for a period of two years and includes language courses, civic education, and vocational training. The level of success of this program is measured by a credit system, which is based on the evaluation of the levels of acquisition of the Italian language (at least A.2 level), of knowledge of the constitution, civic life and institutions. A certain minimum score is a condition sine qua non for a renewal of the residence permit (EMN 2015).

Table 4
Summary of policy indicator scores in Italy (2019)

ITALY		
MIPEX Score (with health) 58		
Dimension/Score	Individual Score	Position in Ranking
Labor Market Mobility	67	11
Family Reunion	64	17
Education	43	24
Health	79	7
Political Participation	25	28
Permanent Residence	67	21
Access to nationality	40	33
Anti-discrimination	78	26

Source: MIPEX 2019.

According to MIPEX, Italy's immigration policies are slightly more favorable than those of France. For instance, non-EU citizens have access to (basic) employment as well as self-employment. However, the lack of targeted support makes it less likely that non-EU residents will find secure jobs in line with their qualifications and skills. Non-EU families have relatively favorable family reunification opportunities. On the one hand, immediate family members can quickly apply for reunification and secure a stable status with nearly equal rights. On the other hand, however, restrictions related to language and economic requirements may increase the family reunification threshold. Families could remain separated as the current local and economic realities in Italy add to existing difficulties in the struggle for economic stability of individuals, in particular migrants (MIPEX 2019).

Although immigrants under the age of 18 have access to education in Italy, newly arrived students (above the age of 18 years) receive little support with accessing all types of schools (e.g., higher education). Italy's level of investments in education do not fully match the growing diversity of its student population as for instance equal access and intercultural education in schools across the country are not fully available yet. In addition, teachers lack support, which could create additional barriers for immigrant students.

In general, health services are accessible to immigrants mainly due to a combination of national and regional policies. All legally residing immigrants and asylum seekers have access to health care and must register with the National Health Service (SSN). However, the documentation required for accessing medical care becomes increasingly complex for this group (MIPEX 2019).

Immigrants in Italy continue to face serious obstacles to their political participation, as they are not permitted to vote or supported to participate in political life. Furthermore, they are only consulted through advisory bodies with lack of capacity throughout Italy. In Italy a 5-year residence is required, and certain additional requirements must be met (e.g. limited time abroad) to be eligible to vote in elections. Long-term residents have a relatively secure status in Italy. Nevertheless, they can still lose their status for various reasons, such as committing a serious crime or being absent from the EU for more than one year (MIPEX 2019).

The procedure for acquiring Italian citizenship is long and entails a severe screening. Applicants continue to face one of the most arbitrary and bureaucratic procedures of all EU-countries for obtaining citizenship. Children of immigrants born in Italy are treated as foreigners throughout their childhood.

In Italy, victims of ethnic, racial, religious and nationality discrimination benefit from multidimensional/multilevel protection. Yet, despite robust enforcement mechanisms, equality bodies are weak, which can be disadvantageous for victims of discrimination (MIPEX 2019).

3.4. *Migrant integration in the Netherlands*

The Netherlands "New Civic Integration Act" (Government of the Netherlands 2021) requires any incoming third country national between 18 and 65 years of age to take a civic integration test. This civic integration path does not require that the foreigner is already on the territory. In recognition of the differences between migrants, the new act offers three integration paths: 1) the B1 route: acquisition of B1-level in Dutch within three years during which migrants can seize opportunities for contact with society and employment and voluntary work; 2) the educational route: applicable to individuals who are in the formal education system to obtain a diploma; 3) the self-reliance route: applicable to individuals who do not fit in any of the two previous routes. Language classes have to be paid by migrants (EMN 2015).

Table 5

Summary of policy indicator scores in the Netherlands (2019)

THE NETHERLANDS		
MIPEX Score (with health) 57		
Dimension/Score	Individual Score	Position in Ranking
Labor Market Mobility	65	14
Family Reunion	31	54
Education	57	14
Health	65	17
Political Participation	50	17
Permanent Residence	52	37
Access to nationality	55	19
Anti-discrimination	85	20

Source: MIPEX 2019.

Newcomers from outside the EU can work in all public and private sector jobs. Long-term residents and families enjoy equal access to education, training, and scholarships. Recently, a national program was launched to support the labor market positioning of young migrants. However, immigrants in the Netherlands still face some obstacles when it comes to receiving targeted support. They also continue to encounter obstacles when attempting to reunite with their families, mainly due to relatively unfavorable policies that have persisted over the years. Thus, generally speaking, despite meeting legal integration requirements, the future of migrant families in the country might remain uncertain (MIPEX 2019).

Immigrants have access to compulsory and non-compulsory education in the Netherlands, regardless of their legal status. Schools continue to receive basic funding and training to address the specific learning needs of immigrant pupils, although standards vary between schools and cities. Immigrants enjoy relatively inclusive rights to health care. Access of legal immigrants and asylum seekers to basic information about their rights is mostly satisfactory. However, sometimes relevant information does not reach all patients or health

service staff, especially regarding undocumented immigrants' rights (MIPEX 2019).

Non-EU citizens legally residing in the Netherlands can vote and run for local elections. With little or no support from consultative bodies, conditions for immigrants' political participation are however unfavorable. As a result, immigrants have little opportunity improve the policies that affect them most.

After five years, immigrants can apply for long-term residence. It should be noted that several categories of temporary residents, such as seasonal workers and those with health care licenses, study/exchange visas and certain family allowances, are ineligible for long-term residence. Migrants who become long-term residents have a half-assured future in the Netherlands. However, with some difficulties, which makes the process daunting. (MIPEX 2019).

Migrants looking to become Dutch citizens have a relatively clear path to citizenship similar to that in most other receiving EU-countries. Unlike in most other EU-countries, dual citizenship is allowed as an exception. Language and integration requirements may dissuade immigrants from naturalizing rather than encourage them to learn the language and fundamental civic values of the country.

Every Dutch resident is protected against ethnic, racial, religious and nationality discrimination in all areas of life, except for social protection, where Dutch law has loopholes. In addition, the mechanisms in place to enforce the Immigration Law are among the strongest among developed democracies (MIPEX 2019).

3.5. *Migrant integration in Portugal*

Different from Italy and the Netherlands, governmental bodies in Portugal offer free voluntary introductory integration courses (Government of Portugal 2015) on language acquisition and civic instruction, but not on vocational training. The Plan contains five different axes (immigrant integration policies, policies to promote the integration of new nationals, coordination policies of migration flows, policies strengthening the migratory legality and quality of migration services, and policies to foster the monitoring and support of the return of national emigrant citizens). The first axis is highlighted as it focusses on anti-discrimination of immigrants and ethnic groups. To obtain a permanent residence permit, command of the Portuguese language at at least A2-level or obtaining a certificate of basic Portuguese language proficiency is required (EMN 2015).

Table 6
Summary of policy indicator scores in Portugal (2019)

PORTUGAL		
MIPEX Score (with health) 81		
Dimension/Score	Individual Score	Position in Ranking
Labor Market Mobility	94	1
Family Reunion	87	3
Education	69	10
Health	65	20
Political Participation	80	7
Permanent Residence	71	17
Access to nationality	86	6
Anti-discrimination	100	6

Source: MIPEX 2019.

According to MIPEX, Portugal, along with Germany and the Nordic countries, is leading in the area of legislation on migrant labor market integration. Portugal's labor market policies ensure equal treatment and targeted support for both Portuguese and non-EU citizens. In the long run, these policies are associated with more sustainable labor market outcomes, as immigrants benefit from better jobs, skills, and thus greater public acceptance.

Portugal enjoys some of the most favorable family reunification policies in the developed world, ranking third in this integration policy with Canada and Brazil. Family reunification is open to many non-EU families who receive the same treatment as Portuguese families.

Based on the results reported by MIPEX, Portugal's strategy towards intercultural education is improving, but still lags behind the leading Nordic countries and traditional destination countries. Since 2016, cultural diversity receives more attention in schools and pupils benefit from the equal opportunities stemming from the realization of this commitment to intercultural education. However, a greater focus on quality and diversity is needed in higher education, the teaching profession and ultimately the entire curriculum (MIPEX 2019).

Similarly, to half of the MIPEX countries, Portugal has been gradually improving access to health care and related information since 2019. However, MIPEX suggests that Portugal could still improve its health regulations by incorporating COVID-related practices into legislation and by incorporating migrant health into all aspects of health, departments and services.

Portugal is, on the one hand, leading in Europe in the political participation of non-EU immigrants and it supports immigrant civil society and consultative bodies. On the other hand, voting rights for immigrants in Portugal remain unequal and limited.

While the pathway to permanent residency is relatively clear for non-EU migrants, most prefer to become Portuguese citizens. In 2018, Portugal improved its world-class Citizenship Model and developed a clearer path for the first immigrant generation after 5 years and for the second immigrant generation born in Portugal. These policies increase immigrant naturalization rates, improve integration outcomes and sense of belonging as well as increase levels of trust.

With relatively recent policies and few resources compared to traditional destination countries, Portugal's strong anti-discrimination laws and enforcement mechanisms are slowly raising levels of public awareness and rates of reported discrimination (MIPEX 2019).

3.6. *Migrant integration in Germany*

As a federal state, Germany's complex integration process includes decisions at the federal, state, and local levels. In 2012, the country has introduced the National Action Plan on Integration (*Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration, NAP*).[3] The NAP focused on various support options and created instruments to measure integration policy. This action plan aims to: 1) optimize individual support for young migrants; 2) facilitate the recognition of foreign diplomas; 3) increase access of migrants to civil service at federal and state levels; 4) provide access to health care. The National Action Plan is based on the involvement of the entire German society and is developed jointly by the federal, state and local authorities as well as migrant organizations. German integration policy is based on the two-way principle: offering support,

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[3] Since the last MIPEX-results, Germany has introduced a new National Action Plan on Integration (Bundesregierung 2020) which is not discussed here, as its results are not reflected in the 2019-MIPEX-results. Hence the following discusion talks about the 2012 National Action Plan on Integration (*Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration, NAP*).

training, and job opportunities to foreigners and at the same time stating their duties and requesting integration efforts from them (Presse und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung. 2016).

Table 7
Summary of policy indicator scores in Germany (2019)

GERMANY		
MIPEX Score (With Health) 58		
Dimension/Score	Individual Score	Position in Ranking
Labor Market Mobility	81	5
Family Reunion	42	48
Education	55	15
Health	63	21
Political Participation	60	13
Permanent Residence	54	36
Access to nationality	42	31
Anti-discrimination	70	28

Source: MIPEX 2019.

Germany, which ranks fifth in the MIPEX Ranking, reinforced its support for equal opportunities for immigrants from third countries to progress towards stable, quality employment. However, not all temporary residents enjoy immediate access to the labor market, vocational training, or public sector jobs.

Germany's family reunification policies are among the most restrictive in most Western European/OECD countries in terms of delays, sponsor eligibility restrictions, and language testing abroad. The remaining requirements are mostly similar to the ones in most other EU-countries and reunited families from third countries enjoy only a slightly secure status.

Over the past years, the integrational aspects of educational policies have slightly improved, moving them to slightly above the average for Western European/OECD countries. Through increased federal and state standards and guidance, Germany has gone halfway to addressing the specific needs and opportunities of immigrant

students at all school levels. The efforts of German states (as the Länder have the competencies for educational matters) for addressing the needs of migrant pupils through comprehensive guidance, language support and teacher training and to require schools to ensure equal access to levels of the education system are slightly below those of the Nordic and traditional destination countries. Nevertheless, these policies still have the potential to close achievement gaps for vulnerable groups in different educational pathways (MIPEX 2019).

According to MIPEX, Germany's approach to migrant health changed little from 2014 to 2019 and remains average for Western European/OECD countries. While Germany's public health care services continue to improve their ability to respond to the specific needs of migrant patients, state and federal policies still lack a comprehensive approach to determine the rights and access of undocumented migrants and asylum seekers.

Similar in approach to most Western European countries, Germany's policies to encourage and support participation of immigrants in civil society may not be sufficient to close the existing political participation gaps. As with several other Western European/ OECD countries, Germany's facilitation of the path to permanent residence and guaranteeing socio-economic rights could still improve. More specifically, Germany and other EU-countries have implemented the relevant EU-Directives on long term residency, however, Germany requires all third country nationals to have a relatively high command of the German language and to achieve high levels of economic self-sufficiency (MIPEX 2019).

The path to German citizenship for permanent residents has been neutral but demanding since 1999. Citizenship-applicants receive support through affordable courses and various explanatory material. It should be noted that Germany is the last major destination country that still applies a blanket ban on dual citizenship (with very few exceptions). Like half of the MIPEX countries, Germany also makes citizenship conditional on the applicant's income and economic situation. These basic requirements are important factors behind Germany's below-average naturalization rates.

According to MIPEX, Germany's anti-discrimination policies are slightly weaker than the European average. While the relevant legal framework has continued to improve across the EU over time, German laws could potentially remain ineffective against discrimination due to insufficient support of potential victims. Stronger policies, however, could help improve public attitudes, awareness of discrimination, reporting and trust in institutions, society

and democracy (MIPEX 2019). For example, the EU-MIDIS 2016 survey (FRA 2017) found that immigrants discriminated against in Germany were less likely to know how to report their case to authorities than immigrants discriminated against in other EU countries with stronger anti-discrimination policies.

3.7. *Migrant integration in Spain*

The immigrant integration policy is carried out by the Secretary of State for Migration, through the Directorate General for Humanitarian Attention and Social Inclusion of Immigrants. The Forum for the Social Integration of Immigrants (FISI) is the Spanish Government's advisory, information and consultation agency for the integration of immigrants. The objective of the Forum is to promote the participation and integration of immigrants in Spanish society by proposing and informing about and channeling actions. The Forum is regulated in Article 70 of Organic Law 4/2000, of January 11, on the rights and freedoms of foreigners in Spain and their social integration and in Royal Decree 3/2006, of January 19. In Spain the state level has the responsibility for migration and asylum policies while regional and municipal levels are assigned social services, health services, education, housing and employment to support social integration. The basis for understanding integration processes in Spain is reflected in the Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Integration (Gobierno de España 2014).

According to MIPEX, non-EU immigrants legally residing in Spain have equal access to employment, self-employment, and general employment support. They do, however, not receive specific support in this area of integration.

Spain's migrant inclusion policy allows many immigrants to reunite with their children and spouse after one year of residence, although strict economic conditions are applied. It should be noted that reunited family members receive a secure residence status.

MIPEX notes that while an increasing number of immigrant pupils can legally access all schools, regardless of academic level, there is limited support for language learning and adequate curricular adaptation for migrants in academic terms (MIPEX 2019).

Since 2018, there have been no legislative or economic obstacles to healthcare for migrants in Spain. Migrants benefit from responsive services and are appropriately advised of their health care rights, but some administrative barriers still persist.

Table 8
Summary of policy indicator scores in Spain (2019)

SPAIN		
MIPEX Score (With Health) 60		
Dimension/Score	Individual Score	Position in Ranking
Labour Market Mobility	67	10
Family Reunion	69	11
Education	43	23
Health	81	5
Political Participation	55	15
Permanent Residence	75	12
Access to nationality	30	41
Anti-discrimination	59	38

Source: MIPEX 2019.

According to MIPEX, immigrants are more likely to participate politically by evading official channels in Spain as electoral politics are inconsistent and funding for information campaigns is limited.

Most third country nationals in Spain can engage in an inclusive process for long-term residency and can apply for it after five years. Permanent residents have access to social security and social assistance (MIPEX 2019).

The naturalization process is Spain's main weakness in the area of integration. Immigrants can become citizens only after having resided in Spain for 10 years and dual citizenship is only granted to citizens from specific countries. In 2015, naturalization requirements were relaxed slightly, which benefited those with economic resources and language skills, but room for improvement still exists.

Victims of racial, ethnic and religious discrimination are protected by law in Spain. Immigrants who are discriminated against benefit from strong enforcement mechanisms.

Spain's equality body has been significantly strengthened over the past 4 years, but it remains weak (MIPEX 2019).

3.8. *Migrant integration in Sweden*

Based on an EMN Luxembourg-report (2015), integration in Sweden is regulated by the Establishment Programme (*Etableringsprogrammet*) which is run by the Swedish Public Employment Service. Since 2018, this program is obligatory and ask from migrants to learn Swedish, to find a job, and to become self-sufficient. The program is targeted to immigrants between 20 and 65 years and to those who have been granted refugee status, who are resettled refugees, or who have humanitarian protection status. According to MIPEX, Sweden ranks second in the area of labor market mobility, together with Finland. Non-EU citizens in Sweden receive equal access to the labor market and to the country's social security system with one limitation: for the first two years in the country as a labor migrant, a work authorization is only available if linked to a specific employer and occupation.

Access of non-EU citizens to education and work-related training is relatively good. Legal residents can invest in their education and skills through equal access to both general and additional targeted support.

The financial thresholds in Sweden for family reunification are high. Since 2016, every immigrant, with the exception of refugees, must have obtained a job with sufficient income and benefits to cover their needs and those of their family. In addition, only under particular circumstances may parents or adult children be reunited in Sweden. However, once reunited, families have the prospects to a relatively secure future in Sweden.

In terms of education, Sweden's specific policies work well with immigrant pupils and address many of their basic needs and opportunities. Immigrant pupils, regardless of their status, are guaranteed equal access to preschool, compulsory and vocational education in the country. In addition, they benefit from initiatives that address their specific learning needs, help them learn their mother tongue and encourage them to appreciate cultural diversity. After compulsory education, immigrant students can also benefit from ad hoc measures that facilitate their access to higher education. These educational policies not only serve to reduce the performance gaps of vulnerable groups in the various educational pathways, but also to foster a common sense of pride, security and belonging to the school.

Swedish healthcare policies dropped slightly on the MIPEX scale due to the 2016/381 law. Rejected asylum seekers lose their so-called LMA card, making it harder for them to follow up on previous care, such as maternal care. Yet, together with those of Switzerland and

New Zealand, Sweden's healthcare policies still offer almost the same healthcare level to legal immigrants, undocumented immigrants, and Swedish citizens. Immigrants with access to the healthcare system are regularly informed about their rights and receive other forms of support in Sweden, such as interpretation support.

Table 9
Summary of policy indicator scores in Sweden (2019)

SWEDEN		
MIPEX Score (With Health) 86		
Dimension/Score	**Individual Score**	**Position in Ranking**
Labor Market Mobility	91	2
Family Reunion	71	9
Education	93	1
Health	83	4
Political Participation	80	5
Permanent Residence	90	4
Access to nationality	83	7
Anti-discrimination	100	1

Source: MIPEX 2019.

Regarding political participation third country nationals can vote and run in local elections after three years of legal residence in Sweden. Immigrants receive relevant information and support for their participation in civil society. Nevertheless, unlike in other countries, Sweden does not provide an official structure for dialogue between immigrant associations and state authorities or politicians but Swedish government funds immigrant associations.

Ranked among the top five countries for permanent residency, Sweden offers a clear and stable path to long-term security and socio-economic opportunities for non-EU residents. Temporary residents who meet basic economic and housing requirements can become permanent residents after four years. Permanent residents benefit from a secure and equitable status while living in Sweden.

To be eligible for citizenship in Sweden, applicants must have lived there for five years. The application process is fairly straightforward and the status of new citizens it the same as Swedish-born citizens.

Ranked first in anti-discrimination, Sweden's laws protect everyone against ethnic, racial, religious and nationality discrimination in all aspects of life. Victims benefit from relatively strong law enforcement mechanisms, receive information about their rights, and can initiate legal proceedings against perpetrators of all types of discrimination. Sweden has a strong single equality authority and can initiate effective state actions. The EU-MIDIS 2016 survey found that immigrants who are discriminated against in Sweden are more likely to know their rights and report the incident to the authorities than in most other EU countries (FRA 2017).

3.9. *Quantitative review: Perceived discrimination of migrants through ESS*

The quantitative analysis is based on the 10th edition of the European Social Survey. This database contains *n*= 446 cases corresponding to the applied criteria of self-perception as discriminated race group in the case countries France, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Germany, Spain, and Sweden. Post-stratified design weighting has been applied for cross-country comparisons. The scores obtained by each country for the dependent variable were treated as differential factor and analyzed through statistical software to detect and examine significant differences in the level of the perceived protection of minority groups across racialized minorities of migrant's backgrounds.

A first descriptive analysis was conducted to identify patterns and to provide general information of each case country. In a second phase, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to identify whether there are contrasts in the equality of means with respect to the level of perceived protection of minority groups in each geographic region (Agresti 2017).

The tested hypothesis asked if the population means are equal. If the population means are equal, then groups do not differ in the dependent variable. The categorical variable that defines the groups that have been compared in this analysis is "EU Case Countries." This variable has been constructed to classify each of the seven countries. The variable is categorical and consists of seven categories of nominal response. The quantitative variable (interval or ratio) in which the countries have been compared is "In country the rights of minority

groups are protected" which has been included in the study to estimate the difference in the index toward perceived minority groups protection in each of the countries. This variable consists of a 0 to 10 ratio categories of interval response.

3.10. *Differences in means of the 7-EU Case Countries*

An ANOVA test was performed, to assess whether there were differences between the levels of perceived of minority discrimination in each of the seven case countries. These countries were taken as fixed factors and the "perceived protection of minority groups" was taken as the independent variable. The Fisher–Snedecor F statistic was used to test the hypothesis of equality of means and to check whether there were statistically significant differences in the dependent variable. The ANOVA analysis showed statistically significant differences between each of the case countries. Table 10 presents the mean scores for the tested variables, the standard deviations, the standard errors, the test of contrast of the equality hypothesis and the corresponding p-value.

Table 10

Differences in means of respect to the level of perceived protection of minority groups

EU case countries	N	M	S. D	E. E	F	p-value
France	90	5.83	2.413	.254		
Italy	23	4.69	2.709	.569		
Netherlands	55	6.48	2.215	.299		
Portugal	24	3.91	3.017	.615	5.939	.000*
Germany	146	6.61	2.562	.212		
Spain	36	5.63	2.633	.441		
Sweden	62	6.55	2.743	.347		
Total	436	6.10	2.644	.127		

Source: Authors through ESS 10th Round.

Table 11
Multiple comparisons of the 7-EU case countries.

i-Country	*j-Country*	Mean difference	Standard Error	*p-value*
France	Italy	1.136	.601	.489
	Netherlands	-.647	.439	.760
	Portugal	1.917	.587	.020*
	Germany	-.783	.343	.254
	Spain	.203	.506	1.000
	Sweden	-.723	.421	.606
Italy	France	-1.136	.601	.489
	Netherlands	-1.783	.639	.080
	Portugal	.781	.749	.944
	Germany	-1.919	.578	.017*
	Spain	-.933	.688	.824
	Sweden	-1.859	.628	.050*
Netherlands	France	.647	.439	.760
	Italy	1.783	.639	.080
	Portugal	2.564	.626	.001**
	Germany	-.137	.406	1.000
	Spain	.850	.551	.719
	Sweden	-.077	.474	1.000
Portugal	France	-1.917	.587	.020*
	Italy	-.781	.749	.944
	Netherlands	-2.564	.626	.001**
	Germany	-2.700	.563	.000***
	Spain	-1.714	.675	.148
	Sweden	-2.641	.614	.000***
Germany	France	.783	.343	.254
	Italy	1.919	.578	.017*
	Netherlands	.137	.406	1.000
	Portugal	2.700	.563	.000***
	Spain	.986	.478	.378
	Sweden	.060	.387	1.000
Spain	France	-.203	.506	1.000
	Italy	.933	.688	.824
	Netherlands	-.850	.551	.719
	Portugal	1.714	.675	.148
	Germany	-.986	.478	.378
	Sweden	-.926	.538	.601
Sweden	France	.723	.421	.606
	Italy	1.859	.628	.050*
	Netherlands	.077	.474	1.000
	Portugal	2.641	.614	.000***
	Germany	-.060	.387	1.000
	Spain	.926	.538	.601

Source: Authors through ESS 10th Round.

A Tukey-method post hoc analysis showed the differences in the perceived protection of minority groups among the reporting racial minorities. Table 11 shows multiple comparisons of minority perceived discrimination in the seven case countries. It becomes visible that there are statistically significant differences between France and Portugal. Italy's statistically significant differences exist only when compared against Germany. In the case of Netherlands, differences are observed in relation to Portugal. For Portugal, the multiple comparison analysis revealed significant differences with all countries, except for Spain and Italy. No significant differences were found between Spain and any of the countries studied. Finally, for Sweden statistically significant differences could only be found with Portugal.

Conclusion

This article sought to answer three questions:

1. How do integration strategies differ amongst the seven case countries in Europe?
2. How do racialized minorities perceive their protection in these states?
3. Is there a relationship between integration strategies and the perceptions of racialized minority groups?

To answer these questions, this paper reviewed integration strategies and integration levels in the European context by reviewing policy indicators related to vulnerabilities faced by immigrants from the Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), as well as several technical reports conducted by the European Migration Network (EMN) Luxembourg. A complementary analysis of European Social Survey (ESS) data was conducted to identify patterns in the perception of minority group protection among racial minorities in each of the seven countries.

In response to the first question, we found that there are notable differences in the integration strategies of each of the countries for each dimension. France, for example, allocates special importance to anti-discrimination policies, access to nationality and access to the health system but still has deficits with respect to other issues such as adaptation of the educational system, family reunification, political participation, labor market policies and access to permanent residence.

Italy shows greater attention to health care access and anti-discrimination policies along with those related to labor market access and family reunification. However, political participation and access to

the education system do not seem to be strategic areas, as is the case with the adaptation of the education system.

In the Netherlands, integration strategies are mainly focused on anti-discrimination policies, access to the health system, and inclusion in the labor market, as opposed to other dimensions such as family reunification, political participation, permanent residence, the right to citizenship and adaptation of the educational system.

Germany emphasizes access to the labor market, anti-discrimination policies, access to health care, and political participation. In contrast, dimensions such as family reunification, access to citizenship, permanent residence, and adaptation of the education system feature less prominently in its integration plan.

Spain mainly centers its migrant integration strategy largely on guaranteeing access to health care, facilitating permanent residence, and family reunification in conjunction with access to the labor market. However, less emphasis is given to issues such as access to nationality, adaptation of the educational system, political participation, and anti-discrimination policies.

In contrast, Portugal and Sweden have developed integration strategies that present a very evident trade-off between each of the sectoral dimensions. Sweden seems to have the most coherent integration strategy. Specifically, Portugal shows a lower level of intersectoral trade-off than Sweden, focusing mainly on labor market access, anti-discrimination policies, political participation, access to nationality, and family reunification. However, in terms of adaptation of the educational system, access to the health system and access to permanent residence, they play a less prominent role.

For the second question, some contradictory findings were observed. In contrast to the data reported by MIPEX on integration strategies of migrants in Portugal, the racial minorities residing in the country report that they feel significantly less protected than the migrants in the other six case countries.; Portugal is followed by Italy, where minorities have similar auto-perceptions. In Spain and France, minorities perceptions are mid-range. This could be an indication of ambivalence, since although there is a tendency towards the positive pole, they do so in a weightless way. Sweden presents a fairly evident trade-off in sectoral policies for the integration of migrants, which is, however, not reflected in the self-perception of its racial minorities. In fact, together with Germany and the Netherlands, it is the country where racial minorities feel that they are protected the most. More specifically, in Germany, self-perceived vulnerabilities are the lowest, followed by Sweden and the Netherlands.

To address the final question, we conducted a review of the existing literature, information on migrant integration indicators and empirical evidence, this study explored the extent to which migrant integration policies and policy coherence influence the vulnerability of migrants in receiving countries, while examining how social minorities evaluate the protection they receive from states.

In line with the PCVM framework, our findings suggest that there is a relationship between immigrant integration and policy coherence, which in turn may affect how minorities perceive their vulnerability. As a general rule, when countries adopt comprehensive and inclusive integration policies that focus on social, economic and cultural aspects, migrants are more likely to experience better outcomes, lower vulnerability, and have a greater self-perception of state protection. These policies generally involve access to education, health care, employment opportunities, language training, and social support networks. However, this is not always the case, as this study has shown that the perception of racialized minorities does not always correspond to the political strategies of integration, as in the case of Portugal.

By bringing together PCD, PCSD, and PCMD to generate a framework of Policy Coherence for Vulnerability in Migration (PCVM), this research demonstrated that policy coherence, both within the migration sector and in other policy areas, plays a crucial role in impacting migrants' vulnerabilities. When there is alignment and coordination between different policy areas, such as immigration, labor, education and social welfare, the overall effectiveness and impact of integration measures increases. Legal migration contributes to development at both destination and origin. Conversely, fragmented and contradictory policies can generate gaps, inconsistencies and barriers that aggravate the vulnerability of immigrants and, consequently, increase deficits in the levels of social sustainability, hence the importance of seeking trade-offs.

Overall, this study underscores the importance of adopting inclusive, comprehensive, and coordinated policies that prioritize migrant integration, and as such are coherent, to address vulnerabilities. Policymakers should aim for a holistic and inclusive approach that considers the diverse needs and challenges faced by migrants, while ensuring that integration measures are supported by coherent policies across various sectors. Therein lies the relevance of a PCVM as a strategy to optimize the design, development and decision making in the management of the migrant integration processes. Additionally, future research should continue to examine the nuanced

dynamics between migrant integration, policy coherence, and vulnerability, while taking into account contextual factors, local dynamics, and the perspectives of migrants themselves. Such knowledge will contribute to evidence-based policymaking and ultimately foster more inclusive, equitable and sustainable societies for both migrants and host communities. In short and as noted above, governance of immigrant integration requires transformational change. Immigrant integration needs to be understood as an influential factor in human development. To this end, this process needs to move towards more systemic and efficient models and include improved functionality of social systems and institutions.

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